

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Amended) A cellulose acetate structure, at least a surface region of which comprises a biodegradable cellulose acetate composition comprising a biodegradation promoting agent contained in cellulose acetate and comprising at least one compound selected from the group consisting of an ~~ester of an oxygen acid of phosphorus, a salt of an ester of an oxygen acid of phosphorous, carbonic acid and a salt of carbonic acid.~~ cellulose phosphate and starch phosphate.

2. (Original) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, wherein said cellulose acetate has a DS value falling within a range of between 2.0 and 2.6.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, wherein said biodegradation promoting agent is contained in an amount of 0.01 to 10% by weight based on said cellulose acetate.

6. (Original) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, wherein said biodegradation promoting agent is in the form of fine particles, and said biodegradable cellulose acetate composition further contains a dispersant for dispersing said fine particles in said composition.

7. (Previously Presented) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, further comprising a photodegradation promoting agent.

8. (Original) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 7, wherein said photodegradation promoting agent comprises titanium oxide.

9. (Original) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, wherein said cellulose acetate structure is in the form of fibers.

10. (Previously Presented) The cellulose acetate structure according to claim 1, wherein said cellulose acetate structure is in the form of an unwoven fabric formed of short fibers having a length of 1 to 100 mm.

Appl. No. 09/941,839

Art Unit 1731

Reply to Office Action of June 12, 2003

11. (Original) A tobacco filter comprising the cellulose acetate structure defined in claim 9.

12. (Original) A tobacco filter comprising the cellulose acetate structure defined in claim 10.